



EPA Proposes Revised Cleanup Plan for Himco Dump Superfund Site

**Himco Dump Superfund Site
Elkhart, Ind.**

April 2003

What Can You Do?

Comments provided by residents and other interested people are valuable in helping EPA decide the best course of action. The Agency encourages you to share your views about the proposed plan modifications. There are two ways to express your opinion during the public comment period. It runs April 11, 2003 to May 12, 2003.

- You may send comments to Gwen Massenburg, Remedial Project Manager or Stuart Hill, EPA Community Involvement Coordinator for the site. Comments must be post-marked by May 12, 2003. The mailing addresses are:
- Gwen Massenburg (SR-6J)
EPA Region 5
OERR
77 West Jackson Blvd.
Chicago, IL 60604
Phone: (312) 886-0983
- Stuart Hill (P-19J)
EPA Region 5
Office of Public Affairs
77 West Jackson Blvd.
Chicago, IL 60604
Phone: (312) 886-0689
- A public meeting will be held at the City Council Chambers, 2nd floor, Municipal Building, 229 S. Second St., Elkhart, on April 23, 2003 from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. You may submit oral

Information continues on back page.

Modifying landfill cap, city water key parts of new plan

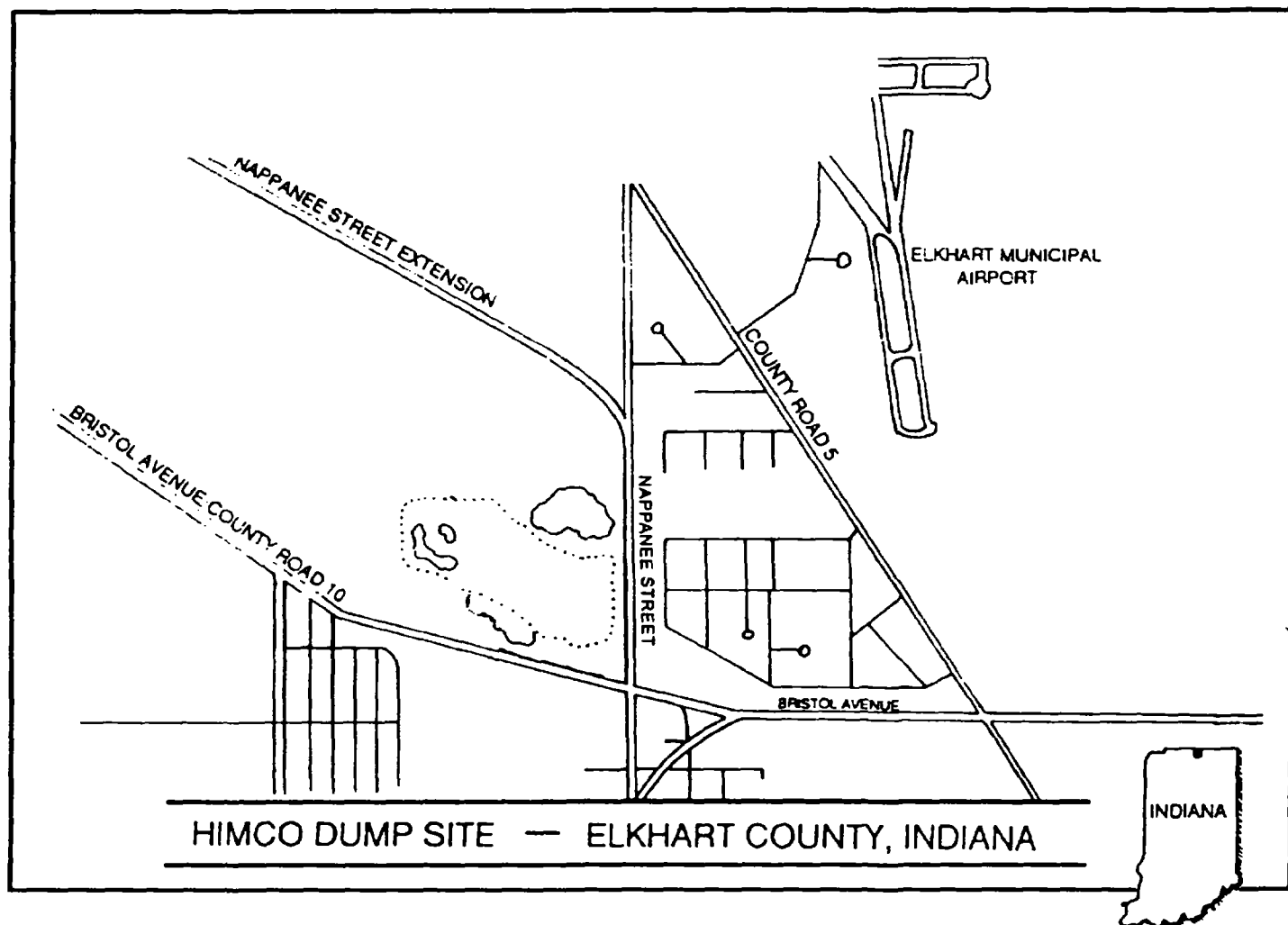
EPA Region 5 wants to change the original cleanup plan for the Himco Dump. The landfill is a Superfund site in Elkhart, Ind. EPA's partner in the cleanup is the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM). The original plan was described in the 1993 Record of Decision for the Himco Dump. It called for a cap with a liner to prevent the rain from carrying the landfill waste material into the ground water. The plan also included ground-water monitoring and a gas collection system to prevent landfill gases from building up under the cap. The new proposed plan eliminates the liner from the landfill cover, but it keeps the ground-water monitoring and gas collection systems. The new plan also asks for private wells to be sealed, new connections to the city water system, and excavating contaminated soil south of the landfill.

The reason for the proposed change in the cleanup plan is because EPA determined the original cap and liner approach for the landfill would be ineffective. During the rainy parts of the year, the landfill waste is in contact with the ground water, a which is term used for underground water supplies. A liner over the waste does not prevent the contact. The new plan is more cost-effective as well. The 1993 plan would cost more than \$18 million to construct today, while the revised plan costs \$14 million. The full text of the proposed plan is available for public review, along with all other documents regarding the landfill, at the official repository located at the Elkhart Public Library, Pierre Moran Branch, 2400 Benham Ave., Elkhart, Ind. 46517. The case file, referred to as the administrative record, can also be reviewed at Region 5's main office at 77 West Jackson Blvd. in Chicago.

The proposed plan is just the first step in an open process EPA must take before any new cleanup plan is approved. EPA will hold a public hearing before making a final decision. Everyone will have a chance to provide feedback about the proposal through written and oral comments. EPA may modify the proposed plan as a result of public input. The 30-day comment period begins April 11, 2003 and extends through May 12, 2003. The public hearing will be held April 23rd at 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Landfill seen as pollution source back in 1971

Himco Dump is a 60-acre landfill located at County Road 10 and Nappanee Street Extension in Elkhart County. The site was owned by Charles Himes and operated by Himco Waste Away Service Inc. between 1960 and 1976. The dump has attracted the notice of officials since the early 1970s, after the hazardous waste buried there began polluting the air and nearby resi-



dents started to complain about the color, taste and odor problems from their wells.

Experts estimated that two-thirds of the landfill waste was calcium sulfate from Miles Laboratories. Other waste included household and commercial refuse, construction and demolition debris, as well as industrial and medical wastes. The Indiana State Board of Health closed the landfill in 1976. In the 1980s, a sampling program showed hazardous waste was detected in the ground water south of the landfill. The chemicals included dangerous metals such as mercury and lead. They also included carbon-based compounds such as phenol, pyrene and benzene, and high levels of sodium. In 1990, the dump was placed on the National Priorities List, officially making it a Superfund site. Also that year, EPA told residents south of the landfill to stop drinking well water due to its high sodium content. A year later, Elkhart extended water lines to the residents.

In May 1992, EPA conducted an emergency removal action to remove 71 large drums containing hazardous waste buried in the landfill. In 1993, EPA issued the first proposed cleanup plan for the landfill. The 1993

plan called for a cap consisting of 18 inches of seeded soil, 6 inches of sand, a plastic liner, 2 feet of clay, and enough fill to ensure the final cap would drain rainwater beyond the landfill boundaries. Officials began testing a spot south of the dump known as the construction debris area. The debris area is about 4 acres in size and contains seven occupied homes and one empty commercial building. Soil and ground-water samples were collected in this area. Lead was discovered in the soil of the debris area in an amount greater than EPA standards allow. Further study of the sample results found the risk for non-cancerous illnesses in children in the area was unacceptably high. Another study on the eastern side of the landfill found that both adults and children possibly faced excessive cancer risks from an organic chemical called 1,2 dichloropropane. This chemical was found in the ground water at levels higher than EPA standards allow. EPA said residents living near the landfill faced unacceptable health risks by breathing landfill gas, accidental consumption of soil, drinking ground water, or by coming into direct contact with landfill soil.

U.S. EPA is interested in your comments on the cleanup alternatives indicated in the Proposed Plan. U.S. EPA will consider public comments before selecting a final cleanup remedy for the Himco Dump Superfund site. Please use the space below to write your comments, then fold and mail this form. Comments must be postmarked by May 12, 2003. If you have any questions about the comment period, please contact Stuart Hill at (312) 886-0689, or through U.S. EPA's toll-free number at 1-800-621-8431. Those with electronic capabilities may submit their comments to U.S. EPA via the Internet at the following e-mail address: hill.stuart@epa.gov.

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____
Zip _____

Fold on Dashed Lines, Tape, Stamp, and Mail

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

Zip _____

Place Stamp Here

Stuart Hill
Community Involvement Coordinator
Office of Public Affairs (P-19J)
U.S. EPA - Region 5
77 W. Jackson Blvd.
Chicago, IL 60604

New cleanup plan recognizes original cap ineffective

EPA determined the 1993 plan would be ineffective because the landfill waste was already in contact with the ground water, and the liner would not prevent further ground-water contamination. The City of Elkhart has also recently obtained a grant to pursue plans to try to redevelop the landfill site. Officials say the 1993 cap and liner would make potential redevelopment difficult due to the high cost of protecting the unnecessary liner.

Details of the new 30-year proposed plan include:

60-acre landfill site

- Add 30 inches of compacted soil on top of the landfill, with the top 6 inches seeded with a native plant species. The soil will be properly graded to prevent erosion.
- Limit land use to commercial and recreational purposes only. Require a feasibility study before any redevelopment.
- Install an active landfill gas collection system that will treat and vent fumes. An enclosed ground-flare system will be installed if gases exceed Indiana standards.
- Quarterly monitoring of the soil-gas system during the first year, then semiannual monitoring for four years. Based on the gas levels, at the end of the five-year period, the new schedule of monitoring will be developed.
- Complete inspections on a quarterly basis the first two years, then twice a year.

Construction debris area

- Excavate all lead-contaminated soil and fill with clean soil.
- Remove all construction debris and fill with clean soil.
- Abandon the 10 private wells in the debris area and make sure all residents are connected to city water. File deed restrictions to prevent any future well installation or use of ground water.

Residential area east and southeast of landfill

- Connect 35 homes to city water. Twenty of the homes are in the select area. Fifteen homes are located in a buffer zone.
- Abandon all private wells once city water is connected and functional. File deed restrictions to prevent any future well installation or use of ground water.

- Complete an extensive ground-water study.
- Install monitoring wells in the buffer zone. Experts will sample the ground water regularly to see if pollution exceeds certain "trigger" levels for each chemical. If it exceeds the "trigger" for four consecutive samples, then city water will be extended to other residents living beyond the buffer zone.

Long-term monitoring

- Ground-water monitoring for at least 10 years for all monitoring wells, quarterly for the first two years and then semiannually.
- Limit future ground-water use, stop new private well use in the landfill's vicinity and allow no drilling or digging on the landfill cover.
- Persons that want to redevelop the dump site must study construction impacts on the landfill cover, soil gas and ground water before redevelopment will be approved.
- Install a fence around the landfill site.
- Conduct extensive five-year reviews of all parts of the cleanup process. If ground-water contamination increases to beyond the "trigger" levels, then a 30-year ground-water treatment system may have to be installed at an additional cost of \$17 million.

Information Repository

An information repository is a file for public review containing documents related to the project and the Superfund program. The repository is located at:

Elkhart Public Library
Pierre Moran Branch
2400 Benham Ave.
Elkhart, Ind. 46517

NOTE: This fact sheet is meant to be a plain-language summary of the proposed plan. If you wish to read about the legal and technical details, the proposed plan is available at the Elkhart Public Library.

The Next Step

EPA will evaluate public comments received during the public comment period before deciding whether or not to amend the cleanup plan for the site. The final cleanup plan will be described in a final decision document that will be available for public review.

After a final plan is chosen, the plan will be designed and implemented.



Office of Public Affairs (P-19J)
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 5
77 W. Jackson Blvd.
Chicago, IL 60604

FIRST CLASS

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

EPA Wants to Change Cleanup Plan for Himco Dump Site

This fact sheet is printed on paper made of recycled fibers.

**EPA Wants to Change
Cleanup Plan for
Himco Dump Site**
New plan saves \$4 million
Eliminates the liner because it's ineffective
Connects 35 homes to city water
Removes contaminated soil
Read this fact sheet for more details

Continued from page 1
and/or written comments at
the meeting. A court reporter
will be on hand to take your
oral comments.
EPA will respond to all com-
ments in a document called the
responsiveness summary. The
responsiveness summary and
all other site documents will
be available for viewing at the
official repository at the Elkhart
Public Library.